

4

694.9.2.
40

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the
SONS of the CLERGY,
AT THEIR
Anniversary Meeting
IN THE

Cathedral-Church of St. PAUL,
ON

THURSDAY, *December* 12. 1723.

H
By W. DELAUNE, D. D.

President of St. John's College, Oxon.

L O N D O N :

Printed for JONAH BOWYER, at the *Rose* in
St. Paul's Church-Yard. MDCCXXIII.

STERN

THE NEW YORK

AT THE

NEW YORK

Collected and arranged by P. A. W.

ON

BY W. D. L. A. W. E. D. D.

L. O. W. D. O. W. E. D. D.
Printed for J. O. W. E. D. D. by the
J. O. W. E. D. D. Press, New York.

TO

The Honourable, Reverend, and the Worshipful,

The Hble <i>J Verney</i> , Esq; Vice-Pt.	Mr. <i>Malachi Hawtayne</i> .
The Revd. Mr. <i>G. Wigan</i> .	Mr. <i>George Wilkinson</i> .
The Revd. Mr. <i>T. Wesley</i> .	Mr. <i>John Wilmer</i> .
<i>John Twissleton</i> , Esq;	Mr. <i>Ambrose Webb</i> .
<i>Edward Jones</i> , Esq;	Mr. <i>Samuel Palmer</i> .
<i>James Cockburne</i> , Esq;	Mr. <i>John Wesley</i> .

STEWARDS

For the late FEAST of the
SONS of the CLERGY.

GENTLEMEN,



DUE Sense of the Honour
you did me, in calling me up
to promote that Charity from
the Pulpit, which I have ever
had the greatest Zeal for; in-
duced me too hastily to under-
take the Task, without sufficiently consider-
ing the Difficulty of it. They who had gone
before, were so unconscionable, as to leave
A 2 nothing

nothing to be said on this Subject, by any one after them. However, I must own great Obligations to those my worthy Brethren on that very Account: Because they have thereby furnished me with a very just Excuse for the Defects of my own Performance.

But such as it is, I now beg your Acceptance of from the Press; which I should never have yielded to do, if I could have contented my self with obeying your Commands by halves. Accept also of my humble Acknowledgment for the great Civility, which I have received from you; and believe me to be with very great Respect,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most Humble,

AND

Obedient Servant,

W. DELAUNE.

lar must be understood by those Words: They must import a great deal more than the bare Authority and Provisional Care of God, which which



It is the God of all Creatures by his Power and Authority, he is the God of his own Inheritance by his Love and Kindness. This is true; that it is too general an Account of his Authority and Provisional Care of God, which which

PSAL. XXXIII. 12.

Blessed is the Nation whose God is the Lord, and the People whom he hath chosen for his own Inheritance.



THE Right of God to govern the World, being founded in his Creation of it, his Dominion must needs be universal: And *be the people never so impatient, the Lord will be king*; and without their Consent, without any Contract, impose his Laws upon all Nations, and under what Penalty he pleaseth, exact Obedience. When therefore a Nation is pronounced *Blessed, whose God is the Lord*, something pecu-

B

liar

liar must be understood by those Words: They must import a great deal more than the bare Authority and Providential Care of God, with which he rules over the whole World. And that People, which is Contradistinction to all other, is called *God's own Inheritance*, and in truth, *chosen by Him* so to be, must undoubtedly enjoy some Privileges, which are not common to the rest of Mankind. If the Lord be the God of all Nations by his Providence, he is the *God of his chosen People by his Grace and Favour*: If he is the God of all Creatures by his Power and Authority, he is the *God of his own Inheritance* by his Love and Kindness. This is true; but it is too general an Account of these comprehensive Words. I shall therefore,

First, Enquire more particularly what is understood by the *Lord* being the God of any People. And this cannot be done, without discovering at the same Time, the unspeakable *Blessedness* of such a Nation.

And because God never chose but one *Nation* to be *his own Inheritance*, which he long ago cast off, and drove them out of the Land which he had given them, and thereby dissolved their Government in Church and State, and hath left them at this Day no better than Vagabonds over the Face of the whole Earth: I shall

Secondly, Enquire by what Title any *Nation* at this Time, may claim the *Lord for their God*. And *Thirdly*, When a Nation is so *Blessed*, as truly to have the *Lord for their God*, I shall shew by what

what Means this inestimable *Blessing* may be lost.

And then,

I shall make use of what will have been said, for the promoting of the pious and charitable Design of this Assembly.

First, I am to enquire, &c. And this will be best done by tracing the Words up to the Fountain-Head; and examining upon what Occasion they were then used. And they will be first found in *Gen. 17. 8.* *And I will give unto thee, and thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.* By which it appears, that they are Words of Gods own chusing, the very Form of Words, by which God was pleased to enter into Covenant with *Abraham*, and his Seed after him; a Form in Gods own Judgment so significant, that he never varies from it. For when this Promise was ratify'd, and made good to the People themselves at Mount *Sinai*, the first Commandment is introduced with the same Declaration; *I am the Lord thy God*, and for that Reason, *Thou shalt have none other Gods but me.* And a little after, God tells *Moses*, that *he will dwell among them, and be their God.* *Exod. 29. 45.* And the Places are innumerable in the Prophets, where Gods Covenant with the *Jews* is expressed in the same Words.

But nothing more evidently points out the extensive Import of these few Words, than that, when *St. John* saw the *Holy City*, the new *Jerusalem*, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, even the Saints themselves,

the blessed Inhabitants of that *Holy City*, hear nothing more from God, but the same Words repeated to them: *And I heard, saith St. John, a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God*, Rev. 21. 23. By which it appears, that the Lord's Promise to be the *God of a People*, implies, giving them a Right to all that is His, as well in Heaven as in Earth, not even excluding a Property in himself. For the Nation who have the Lord for their God, have his *Power* for their Defence, his *Mercy* for their Pardon, his *Grace* to assist them in their Duty, his *Justice* to avenge them of their Enemies, and his *Truth* to secure them of the Performance of his Promises. And thus to have a Property in the *Attributes* of God, is to have a Property in God; they not being really distinct from God, but differing only in our Conceptions. Thus likewise the Divine Persons, being undivided in their Nature, are united in the Covenant, and the People of God have a Property in every one of them. The *Son* gave himself for them, and to them, and owns them for his Brethren; by which means they are adopted into God's Family, and the *Father of Christ* truly becomes *their Father*. So also the Holy Ghost is theirs: He is sent to them, and bestows himself upon them, to be their Sanctifier and Comforter, that he may dwell in them as in Temples of his own, and enrich them with his Gifts; his Light, his Strength, his Joy, his Holiness and Happiness: by whose Operation also they have the Character and Resemblance of God's Perfections imprinted upon them-

themselves, which St. Peter scruples not to call, being *partakers of the Divine Nature*; 2 Pet. 1. 4. particularly of the Glory and Immortality of it. And our Saviour's Argument to prove the Resurrection of the Body, from Gods stiling himself, the *God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*, is a Demonstration, that this Form of the Covenant doth import a Communication of Life and Immortality. For the living God can hold no Communion with the dead; whence it necessarily follows, that those Patriarchs must live for ever; which they cannot do, unless their Bodies be again united to their Souls; for during the Separation of them, they are in the State of Death.

But is the Lord thus to be *the God of his Inheritance, and are not they to be as entirely his People*? Yes surely, or else it could be no Covenant; and both Parts of it are frequently join'd together, when God says, *I will be their God, and they shall be my people*; summing up all their Duty to him, in the same short Way, as he doth all his Promises to them. And from what hath been already said on God's Part of the Covenant, what his People's Part is in it will be easily understood.

'Tis not only to be subject to his Dominion, to depend upon him, and to be govern'd by him; so all People upon Earth are his: But it is also voluntarily to give him also a Property in themselves, to yield up their *Hearts, and Wills, and Affections* to him, and to refer all they do ultimately to his Glory; not as free, and in their own Power; but *His* only, who by Covenant hath condescended to be *Theirs* also; that they should no longer live to themselves,

(to

(to Sin, to Satan, and to the World) but to Him only, who hath given himself to them. Their *Minds* should be God's, to know him; their *Will*, to worship and obey him; their *Heart*, to love him; their *Ears*, to hear his Voice; their *Mouth*, to celebrate his Praise; and their *Hands*, to do his Work: All which is thus summ'd up by St. Paul; *Yielding all your Members as Instruments of Righteousness unto God*; Rom. 6. 13.

Secondly, Since God never chose but one Nation to be *his own Inheritance*, promising them to be Their God; and that Nation hath been long ago cast off by him; I am to enquire, By what Title, at this Day, any Nation can lay a just Claim to *the Lord for their God*.

And the Answer to this Enquiry is very obvious: For if God never enter'd into such a Covenant, but only with *Abraham*, and his Seed after him; whatever Nation claims *the Lord for their God*, must claim under him with whom God made the Covenant. Which, although for some Time it was confined to the *Jews* only, yet, from the Beginning, it was designed at last to extend a great deal farther: For we find, that God not only promised that Patriarch to be *his God*, and *the God of his Seed after him*; but gives him repeated Assurances, that *in his Seed all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed*; pointing at the Times of the *Messiah*, to whom, out of every Country, *the gathering of the People was to be*. For Christ was the very Foundation, upon which the Covenant of Grace was built;

built ; which being but One, must be the same in both Testaments : And that of the New is never spoken of as different, but only as a more perfect State of the Same, which was long before made with *Abraham*. Thus old *Zacharias*, full of the Holy Ghost, tells us, that the Coming of the *Messiah*, was to perform the mercy promised to our forefathers, and to remember his holy Covenant ; the Oath which he swore to our Father *Abraham* ; Luke 1. 72, 73. And St. Peter tells the Jews, that *Christ* before was preached unto them ; Acts 3. 30. And St. Paul calls the Promise, expressly, the Gospel : And the Scripture, says he, foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen thro' faith, preached before the Gospel unto *Abraham*, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed ; Gal. 3. 8. And the Faith which was imputed to *Abraham* for Righteousness, is recommended as an Example for Christians ; and he is called the Father of the faithful, with regard to the Gentiles as well as Jews ; and the promise made to him four hundred and thirty years before the law, is called by the Apostle, the Covenant that was before confirmed of God in *Christ*. Gal. 3. 17. So that when the same Apostle, in another place, Rom. 16. 25. calls the Preaching of *Jesus Christ*, the Revelation of the Mystery, which was kept secret since the world began ; he must not be understood to mean, absolutely kept secret, but only in respect of the Promulgation of it among the Gentiles, or the Completion of it in those latter Days among the Jews.

For though, in Substance, the Covenant of both Testaments be the same ; yet it was distinguished by

by many accidental Differences. To mention only Two of the most material. The *Old* exhibited the *holy Seed which was to bruise the serpent's head*, only as promised, and to come; the *New*, as already come, and manifested to all Nations. The *Old* Testament was all Symbolical and Figurative; in which the divine Mysteries, and Promise of Eternal Life, were wrapp'd up in the dark Coverings of Types and Ceremonies; but the Grace of God, in the *New*, was plain and open, and *appeared to all men*; Tit. 2. 11. Hence the former is compared to Night, because *the Sun of Righteousness* was not then risen; the latter, to the Light, the World being then *visited by the day-spring from on high*.

Thirdly, Because Experience hath shewn, that God may be provok'd to cast off a *Chosen People*; I am now to shew, by what means a Nation may pull down that heavy Judgment upon themselves.

And this will be best learn'd, by observing by what means the *Jews* lost it; and that was their Infidelity in the *Messiah*, and the Consequences of it, his Crucifixion. For although the Corruption of their Manners was often very great and general, their Idolatry gross and frequent; yet nothing could provoke God totally to cast them off, till they cast him off, by rejecting Christ, the Mediator of the Covenant between them. God oftentimes suspended his Favour, as they withdrew their Obedience, or chose to themselves other Gods. Sometimes they were

were given up as a Prey to devouring Plagues, or meagre Famine : Once, to satisfy the speedy Demands of God's just Indignation, the Earth open'd her Mouth, to swallow up no small Company of *Free Thinkers* ; who, in Contempt of God's Ordinance, took upon themselves to offer Incense ; and Fire consumed the rest. God often left his People to the Rage and Fury of their Enemies, to be put to flight, slain, plunder'd ; to be made tributary Slaves, or even to be carry'd away into Captivity.

But these were Judgments, with respect to the Body Politick, which had a Mixture of God's Fatherly Love with his Wrath ; being designed to call to their Remembrance, *who was their God, and whose People* they had bound themselves to be. The Divine Patience held out as yet ; but, Infinite as it is, gave way at last, at the Completion of their Infidelity ; when the Rulers and Governors, even the Great *Sanhedrim*, rejected, and persecuted to death their Redeemer ; who, for so many Ages, had been expected, and in whom all God's Promises had been made. This, at last, brought on the utter Excision of that Church and Nation.

Neither was this *Effect of Infidelity in Christ* peculiar to the *Jews* ; but it was an *Effect* necessarily flowing from the Nature of the Cause, and will be the same in all Ages. For, as *Faith in Christ* is the only Thing that gives any Nation a Title to the Benefits of the Covenant, and procures *the Lord to be their God* ; so, *Infidelity* in him, at all times, as certainly dissolves the Covenant, and deprives them of all Pretence to be *God's Inheritance*.

And

C

when

when any Christian Nation perceives the Seeds of *Infidelity in Christ* sown among them; in proportion to the Springing up and Increase of them, they see Destruction coming on, and a gradual Approach to their utter Ruin. The Nature of the Sin is the same as it was with the *Jews*; and God's Arm is not shorten'd since, neither are the Vials of his Wrath exhausted.

The Son of God, in human Flesh, was then mock'd, buffeted, and spit upon; and, as a vile Impostor, was arraigned, condemned, and crucified: And was it not for this, that God's Vengeance was so signally poured out upon them, and pursues them still to this very Day?

But what, I beseech you, do our Baptized Infidels do less? They came into the World too late, to have the Pleasure of staining their Hands with his Blood, or to cry out, *Crucify him, Crucify him*; but they justify that Cry, and spare no Pains to persuade the World, that he was an *Impostor*; that is, *A Rogue*, and *a Cheat*; who suffer'd nothing, but what he deserv'd. And what is this less than nailing him to the Cross again, and piercing his Side? What is *counting the Blood of the Covenant an unholy thing*? What is *Crucifying the Son of God afresh*, and *putting him to an open shame*; if this be not? And sure the Baptism of these Men in the Name of Christ, will not alleviate their Guilt.

Well would it be for their Country, if their Guilt reach'd only to themselves: But, alas! as Apostates are Rebels against God, so they are Traitors to their King and Country; and not only use their
best

best Endeavours to rob them both of their only sure Defence, *their God, the Lord of Hosts*; but to draw him over to turn his mighty Arm against them, which no Power can resist, nor Policy put by.

If then, in a Christian Country, Infidelity necessarily carries Treason in it, and renders Men (in truth) the most dangerous *Conspirators*; A firm Belief in Christ, and a warm Zeal for his Religion, will render Men the best *Friends* to their Country; whose Faith and Piety tend surely to the keeping of *the Lord for Their God*.

And if every good Christian hath thus a Share in preserving that invaluable Blessing; how great a Part in it must be ascrib'd to that Order of Men, which Christ hath instituted in his Church for the *Ministry*; to instruct his People in the true Faith; to draw Arguments (as the Apostles always do) from the Articles of it, for an holy Life; Through whose Hands, by Christ's Appointment, all the outward Means of Grace must be convey'd. 'Tis their Business to preach his Word, and administer his holy Sacraments. However this Sacred Order may of late have been reviled, their *Ministrations* not only depreciated, but ridicul'd; sure I am, that St. Paul directed the *Thessalonians* to know, that is, to regard, *those who labour'd among them, and were over them in the Lord, and admonish'd them; and to esteem them very highly in love, for their works sake*; 1 Ep. Chap. 5. v. 12.

But, I know, it will be said, (as it often hath been in the like Cases) that this concern'd only the Church

in that Age : which is no less than to say, the Church and that Age were to end together. But blessed be God, we have not so learned Christ. We know that his Church here on Earth shall last as long as that, and that the Gates of Hell shall never prevail against it : And that therefore, in Spight of all the Emissaries sent from thence, the Ministry of Christ shall stand immoveable ; for according to his own Constitution, he can have no Church without it.

Let these Thoughts dwell in our Minds, when we take into Consideration those Wants which now call upon us for Relief. They are the Wants of such, as have either been made one with Men of this Sacred Order by Holy Matrimony, or by Descent have their Blood running in their Veins. This near Relation to an Order of Men, I will not say so *useful*, but so *necessary* in a Christian Country, surely entitles them to a comfortable Subsistence in it. When any Men by useful Inventions, by wise Counsels, by a faithful Discharge of the Trust reposed in them at Home, or by their Courage and Conduct in the Field, have done their Country Signal Service ; it hath been the Practice of all Nations, to express the Sense of their Merit, by some Regard to their Families. It hath not been thought enough to confine their Gratitude to the Persons of such Men ; but great Wealth and Honour are very often transmitted down from them to distant Generations. And shall those want the common Comforts of Life, who are truly a Part of such Men, as are necessary Instruments in preserving to us *The Lord for our God* ; without whose

whose Blessing, no Man's Art, or Arms, or Counsels can be successful ?

This most Pious and Charitable Assembly answers, No; there is Care taken of them. And that the Provision made, doth not yet reach to the full Proportion of their Wants, is not caused by any Want of Zeal or Industry in the Promoters, but in the Nature of this great Work; which is so extensive, that it will require long Time to be compleat.

To the Eternal Honour of our Nation, this Undertaking hath met with Encouragement from all Orders and Degrees of Men amongst us. From the Crown it received its Life and Being, by becoming a Corporation endow'd with proper Powers to carry it on. Those Powers, as soon as there was Occasion, have been enlarged by the Piety of His Present most Gracious Majesty, who moreover, joined himself as a Fellow-Labourer in this Work of Charity, by what hath dropp'd from his own Royal Hands.

And God's Blessing on it is manifestly seen, by the many Benefactors he hath already rais'd up, who shine as Lights to lead on others in the same Track of Piety. They are too numerous to have just Honour paid them in such short Discourses, but their Names are recorded where they will never die, *And their righteousness will be had in everlasting remembrance.*

But one, I know not how to pass by in Silence, who was carrying on a Design many Years for the Service of this Corporation, and might more properly be called their Steward, than Master of his own. So
that

that the Reproach which is commonly cast upon Death-bed Charity, viz. *That such Men do no more than leave what they cannot keep*, could by no Means be justly charged upon him, who had made *his Treasure theirs* before, and only stayed till he could gather it all together, in order to do the greater Good. For what he laid out in a noble Enlargement of his College, which was what they much wanted, plainly shew'd him to be as free to part with his Money in the best State of Health, as on his Death-bed. Nor indeed was his good Husbandry for your Sakes, in any Part of Life tarnish'd with the least Appearance of Avarice, but he lived as generous and charitable as he dy'd. And we may with humble Confidence believe, that he is now at Rest in Paradise, waiting with Patience and Comfort, till *The Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, and shall sit upon the throne of his glory, and say to him among the Jews on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; I was naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.*

This compendious Account of the Proceedings at the Day of Judgment, in every Man's Breast who will consider it, must kindle a most ardent Desire of rendring himself a fit Object for such an Address from his Saviour. We see, he chuses to put our Trial as it were, upon this single Point of Charity to the Poor, and uses the most powerful Argument

ment to invite us to it; when he accepts what is done for them, as done to himself. And indeed, the Honour of God is so much concern'd in it, that in some Sense, the Money so given may be literally said, to be given to him.

The great Poverty, which hath ever been too visible in the World, hath always been objected against Providence by wicked Men; as if our Maker was either regardless of his Creatures, or not able sufficiently to provide for them. In one Case, he is profanely compared to the *Ostrich*, which, we are told, is *harden'd against her young ones, as though they were not hers*; and in the other Case, to a vain Man, who out of Pride and Ostentation, keeps more Servants than he can maintain. But there is not more Impiety than Falshood in this Objection; there being large Stores laid up by God for all such as are not provided for in the common Course of his Providence. For wherever God hath given Riches, he hath laid up for the Poor, and given them such a Title to their Part of them, as no Power on Earth can deprive them of. 'Tis a Right which no false Witness can swear them out of, nor corrupt Judge interpret away: It stands good in Defiance of the greatest Armies, and is out of the Reach of the Legislature it self; being established by the great Proprietor of all Things, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. So that the Poverty among Men, and the Dishonour which redounds from thence to God; is all to be laid to their Charge, with whom he has trusted this last Reserve of his Bounty, and which they have fraudulently detained in their own Hands. Which is so heinous a Crime, that

at

at the last tremendous Day, it will extort a dreadful Sentence from the most merciful Jesus: when he will set such Men on his left Hand, and say to them, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye cloathed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not.*

God forbid, any one of Us should be then found among those unfaithful Stewards. We cannot but see, how highly it concerns us to make use of the Time we have, to *do good unto all men*; not excepting even those, who by their Sin and Folly have distress'd themselves: But let us not now forget, that we are more especially bound so to do, to *them who are of the household of faith*: To them who are not the Authors of their own Wants, but who have providentially been born to Penury and Want; and that not rarely occasioned by the Virtue of their Fathers, who chose rather to want Bread, than to abound in it by base and sinful Compliances: To the Widows and Orphans of those, who have spent their Lives in guiding Souls in their Way to Heaven; whose Business it was, to teach, explain, and defend *that Faith*, which only can give us a Title to the *Lord for our God*, and our selves to be his *Inheritance*. In short; To such as are left hungry, and thirsty, and naked, by the Ministers of *Christ: Christ*, who feeds us with the *Bread of Life*, and cloaths us with his own *Righteousness*, and who is gone before, to provide *Mansions for us in his Father's*
King.

Kingdom. Where the Charitable Man, when he shall overtake his Alms, which he sent up thither, to make way for him, will be welcom'd by his Redeemer; and the Comfort which the Son of God felt, by the Beneficence of pious Christians to the afflicted Members of his Mystical Body the Church, will be thankfully acknowledg'd, and return'd in a Manner answerable to the Dignity and Ability of the Great Person who owns the Kindness. His Father also will then lay open his Treasures, and be no longer in Debt for the Money lent him here on Earth.

This being so: what Tongue can express, or Heart conceive the Advantage of, thus employing our Money? While it is in our Hands, how many Ways may it slip out of them? At most, we can keep it no longer than our Life, every Moment of which, for ought we know, may be the last. But if we lay up our Treasure in Heaven, there it will purchase for us, not deceitful stinging Pleasures, not mouldering Palaces, not the tawdry Pageantry of Grandeur, empty Titles, and the Flattery of Sycophants: but an Eternal Rest in the Fruition of God, the Fountain of all good; an Happiness no less secure than great.

Do not our Hearts within us, burn with an impatient longing for it? And have we not an Opportunity now in our Hands to make a good Advance towards it? Let no Man deceive himself, and when he puts his Hand into the Bason, think he is parting with his Money: No; if he will take the Word of God for it, he is laying it up for ever, and the Increase will be such, that in the strictest Propriety of Speech, the

D

more

more he gives, the richer will he return Home. At the general Day of Retribution, he will find it brought to his Account, more by an Hundred-fold, and will look back upon all such charitable Acts as this, as so many Steps to Heaven; and spend Eternity in blessing and praising God, by the Help of whose Grace he laid hold of such Opportunities.

Now, that we all here may improve this Opportunity at present to the best Advantage; and, as we meet together to join in the same Act of Piety and Charity, that we may also, at the Last Day, meet together to partake of the Reward of it; *GOD, of his Infinite Mercy, grant.*

*To whom, with the Son and the Holy Ghost,
be all Honour and Glory, Might, Majesty
and Dominion, now and for ever. Amen.*

F I N I S.

